

IN THE CLAIMS:

Entry of the following amendments is respectfully requested in order to place the claims in condition for allowance:

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1. (currently amended) A method for authenticating a spare vehicle key to be used with a vehicle in the absence of a regular key, the method comprising the acts of:

- providing the spare vehicle key with an identification number;
- transmitting said identification number to a central station from a source other than from the vehicle;
- checking the transmitted identification number by the central station; and
- authenticating the spare vehicle key and sending an authorization signal from the central station directly to the vehicle.

2. (currently amended) The method according to Claim 1, wherein at ~~least~~ least one data transmission by and between the spare vehicle key, central station and vehicle is encoded.

3. (original) The method according to Claim 2, wherein said data transmission occurs in one direction followed by transmission of a confirmation signal in an opposite direction.

4. (original) The method according to Claim 3, wherein bidirectional data traffic in one direction takes place based on a public key and decoding at the central station takes place based on a private key.

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5. (currently amended) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the act of ~~transmitting~~ checking the identification number of the spare vehicle key ~~to~~ by the central station includes comparing the identification number of the spare key transmitted from a source other than the vehicle with the identification number of the spare key transmitted from ~~is carried out by~~ the vehicle, said identification number of the spare vehicle key having been previously transmitted to the vehicle.

6. (currently amended) The method according to Claim 2, wherein the act of ~~transmitting~~ checking the identification number of the spare vehicle key ~~to~~ by the central station includes comparing the identification number of the spare key transmitted from a source other than the vehicle with the identification number of the spare key transmitted from ~~is carried out by~~ the vehicle, said identification number of the spare vehicle key having been previously transmitted to the vehicle.

7. (currently amended) The method according to Claim 3, wherein the act of ~~transmitting~~ checking the identification number of the spare vehicle key ~~to~~ by the central station includes comparing the identification number of the spare key

transmitted from a source other than the vehicle with the identification number  
of the spare key transmitted from ~~is carried out by~~ the vehicle, said identification  
number of the spare vehicle key having been previously transmitted to the  
vehicle.

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8. (currently amended) The method according to Claim 4, wherein the act  
of ~~transmitting~~ checking the identification number of the spare vehicle key ~~to~~ by  
the central station includes comparing the identification number of the spare key  
transmitted from a source other than the vehicle with the identification number  
of the spare key transmitted from ~~is carried out by~~ the vehicle, said identification  
number of the spare vehicle key having been previously transmitted to the  
vehicle.

9. (original) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the transmitting  
acts are performed using telephony.

10. (original) The method according to Claim 2, wherein the transmitting  
acts are performed using telephony.

11. (original) The method according to Claim 3, wherein the transmitting  
acts are performed using telephony.

12. (original) The method according to Claim 4, wherein the transmitting acts are performed using telephony.

13. (original) The method according to Claim 5, wherein the transmitting acts are performed using telephony.

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14. (original) The method according to Claim 1, wherein said transmissions are encoded with a random number.

15. (original) The method according to Claim 2, wherein said transmissions are encoded with a random number.

16. (original) The method according to Claim 1, wherein before an actual data transmission, a radio receiver in the vehicle is activated by the spare vehicle key.

17. (new) A method for authenticating a spare vehicle key to be used with a vehicle in the absence of a regular key, the method comprising the acts of:

providing the spare vehicle key with an identification number prior to requesting authentication of the spare key;

transmitting a random number generated by the key and the key identification number to the vehicle;

transmitting the random number generated by the key to a central station  
with an identification number of the vehicle from a source other than the vehicle;

transmitting the random number generated by the key from the central  
station to the vehicle using an encoding associated with the vehicle identification  
number;

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comparing the random number generated by the key received from the  
central station with the random number generated by the key received from the  
key by the vehicle;

transmitting the key identification number to the central station from the  
vehicle if the key random numbers match;

checking the transmitted key identification number by the central station;  
and

authenticating the spare vehicle key and sending an authorization signal  
from the central station to the vehicle.

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